

RELIGION IN THE S.S.

One has come to expect the S.S. to be rather dull, but at least it always used to put forward the Socialist case. Since last August, however, a series which does not do this has been running in its pages.

Articles in the S.S. which do not put forward the Socialist case may be quite acceptable if they do not actively contradict that case and are scientifically accurate. But these articles bristle with gross inaccuracies and misstatements, such as to lower the standard of the S.S. in the eyes of any intelligent reader.

The author starts off by asking the question "What Is Religion?" and commenting: "Most people think they know what religion is, but nearly everybody has different ideas. . . ."

However, he doesn't tell us what it is himself. He says he is going to tell us; he says: "Religion, then can be said to consist of five things. . . ." but the five things he gives us are only his chapter-headings, and are quite worthless as explanations. Any Socialist answer to the question would explain religion by reference to its change and development with changing society, not by a series of abstract headings—"1. Belief in God or gods. 2. Belief in Miracles. 3. Belief in Life after Death. 4. Belief in the Efficacy of Prayer. 5. Belief in Holy or Inspired Books."

These are five particular aspects of religion—one could select any number of others—which arise in various forms in response to the needs of society at different times and places. Marx himself (e.g. in the "Introduction to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law") consistently adopts this dynamic and historical viewpoint. These articles, on the other hand, give a completely static analysis. They adopt a uniformly un-historical—and therefore unsocialist—approach.

If these articles were accurate and well-written in other ways, the author and the Editorial Committee might be forgiven for

publishing non-socialist matter. But even accepting the static position put forward, there are shocking errors of fact and interpretation such as to damage the value of the S.S. as a propaganda medium. Here are three or four of them, gathered from a plentiful selection.

1. "All the arguments for God yet launched fall into five categories. . . ." So says our author, and promptly leaves out the Ontological Proof, perhaps the most famous one of all. He also leaves out Revelation, which is certainly the most-often-quoted "proof." Worst of all, he never examines the term "God" to distinguish the numerous possible interpretations of it, ranging all the way from an extra-powerful man to an unknowable Absolute.

2. "Materialists have consistently claimed that matter always existed and always will exist, because you can neither make nor destroy matter. . . ." Well, well. So all the physicists are wrong. They say that all elementary particles are capable of being created and destroyed, given suitable conditions, and that some of them—neutrons and mesons—even destroy themselves in a free state. Wrong again, Comrade Jarvis.

3. "In other parts of the world where primitive people had lived in comparative isolation and had not been contaminated by missionaries, many of them remained agnostic." The first definition of Agnosticism given in my dictionary is this—"The doctrine that neither the nature nor the existence of God nor the ultimate character of the universe is knowable." How an illiterate savage can get ideas like this, God only knows! Nor can one understand how a socialist can spout this nonsense—and be allowed to get away with it in the Party's official organ. It is on a par with Comrade Offord's assertion that the people of China have no religion, but have a dialectical outlook instead!

4. "No doubt the only knowledge some

of the first priests had was that they knew that there was by bluff prestige and power to be obtained from the god business. Savages and primitive man were very credulous. . . ." Apart from the bad writing itself, this rationalist claptrap has no place in a socialist paper. The "first priests" were god-kings, or (later) derived their status from a god-king. A king of this kind derives his magical powers not from his cunning in imposing himself on a credulous populace, but, as Caudwell very well puts it, "because his rôle, forced on him by the division of labour, makes him in fact custodian of those supra-individual forces which arise from division of labour and the association of men." (*Further Studies in a Dying Culture*, p.36).

The lowest ebb of Jarvis' articles is reached in the section on the Bible. His niggling criticisms, abstract in the worst sense, ignore all the Biblical criticism and counter-criticism of the last hundred years, and appear to have been written off the cuff, as one might expatiate to a crony in the café. His arguments come nowhere near the positions actually held by educated Christians to-day. They only touch the most superficial assumptions of those few who take the Bible quite literally. The thinking Christian (and surely no other would start reading the S.S.?) tends more and more to agree with Santayana—"The idea that religion contains a literal, not a symbolic, representation of truth and life is simply an impossible idea. Whoever maintains it has not come within the region of profitable philosophising on the subject."

The amazing side to the whole business is that seven instalments of this epic have appeared—and more to come, comrades, more to come—when the whole thing really came to an end soon after it began. At the end of the second instalment, Comrade Jarvis said the materialist "is content with the fact (or rests on the basis) that one can neither make nor destroy matter, so therefore has no

need to look into the pros and cons about God, but lets him sleep undisturbed except for the enquiries of the secularists, free-thinkers, rationalists and the like." Yet after making this seemingly conclusive statement, on he goes for another five issues, and the end still not in sight!

There is one reference to Marx, and one

reference to economics, in the entire opus. These are the only two concessions made to the socialist outlook in what has so far appeared. Even if the following instalment(s) are packed with socialist meat, that's still an unconscionable deal of rationalist mish-mash.

Surely a socialist paper should only con-

tain articles which at least make a reasonable attempt at being socialist? Or even if they are not directly socialist, surely their standards of accuracy and scholarship should be such as not to disgrace a paper devoted to scientific socialism? What is the policy of the Editorial Committee?

J. C. Rowan.

THE WORLD FOR THE WORKERS

So the Editorial Committee of FORUM considers my article published in the February issue objectionable. I am not surprised. I note that the Editorial Committee has never considered any other article published in FORUM objectionable, not even when the writer is opposing the Declaration of Principles of the Party of which is a member. It possibly can be explained by the fact that the Editorial Committee disagrees with the D. of P. At least one member does, namely S. R. Parker.

In April 1953 an article was published in FORUM (in error without the signature "S.R.P.") entitled "People of the World—Unite". In a paragraph under the heading "Amend the D. of P." the author stated "It may be noticed that what I am saying in this article conflicts with certain phrases in the Party's Declaration of Principles. In order that readers may be able to make comparisons, I suggest a number of amendments." The writer of the article then proposed to amend half the D. of P. in order to make it fit his case. He called his amendments "revolutionary" changes.

I was amazed that any member of the Party could hold such ideas which were so much in conflict with the Party's case that the member concerned wanted to amend half the D. of P. I wrote an article in reply, published in June.

S. R. Parker, making a reply in the July issue, stated "My amendments to the D. of P. were not in order to make our propaganda unselective." The truth of this can be seen in the fact that the words "working class" appear in nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the D. of P., and in each case S. R. Parker proposed deleting them.

Because of pressure on space, a number of articles received have unavoidably had to be left over until next month.

Despite the facts shown that S. R. Parker is opposed to much of the D. of P., despite the fact that he himself proposed amending half the D. of P., the Editorial Committee now in all innocence requests facts which led me to make the accusation that there are individuals in the Party who are opposed to the D. of P. and who have differences with the Party on fundamental aspects of its case. There are none so blind as those who don't want to see.

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In December 1953 an article appeared over the initials A.A.N. Now this article confirmed up to the hilt my opinion that there were individuals in the Party who differed with the Party on fundamental aspects of its case. I think, for the benefit of the Editorial Committee of FORUM, we had better have a look at the D. of P.

I have my combined membership card and rule book in front of me. The first words are "The World for the Workers". It is obvious from A.A.N.'s article that he objects to that. No doubt he would like it to read "The World for all Human Beings". Rule 1 makes it clear that any person desiring membership must accept the Principles of the Party. On the object, namely Socialism, there is no disagreement, provided we keep to the brief statement given in all Party literature except FORUM. But how much of the D. of P. does A.A.N. accept?

When one reads through the D. of P. and the elaboration given in our pamphlet no. 12 (which I consider the finest pamphlet the Party has produced) it is difficult to harmonize any of A.A.N.'s ideas with the views of the Party. As an example would A.A.N. agree with this statement: "The class struggle finds its highest expression in the movement for the overthrow of the capitalist system of society"? That is the Party's view, but A.A.N. states in December FORUM "that the SPGB should not

participate in the class struggle".

It is needless to dwell on no. 5 of the D. of P.—both S. R. Parker and A.A.N. make it abundantly clear that they disagree with it. It is absurd to think the Editorial Committee of FORUM doesn't know this; however it keeps respectfully silent.

No. 6 states in brief that the working class must organise consciously and politically to capture political power, with the object of using it as the means of dispossessing the capitalist class. It is clear that once we capture political power the capitalist class will be dispossessed. What chance have they to resist? The powers of state are in the hands of the working class. The state is not abolished—it dies out after Socialism has been established. It is not a case of morally persuading the capitalist class to give up its ownership of the means and instruments of wealth production.

The capture of state power by the working class, the transformation of the means and instruments of wealth production and distribution into common property, means that the production of commodities is done away with. By this act the working class frees the means of production from the character of capital. But in doing this it abolishes itself as a class; it abolishes all class distinctions and antagonisms. When the means of life are common property class society ceases to exist. But this remains a dream until we capture state power, hence no. 6 of the D. of P. Once again, it is apparent from their articles that both S. R. Parker and A.A.N. disagree with the above statement, which is part of the Party's case.

Since I wrote the article published in February, A. Turner has placed in writing some of his opinions. Up till now most of what I knew regarding his views has been hearsay. But it appears that his views also disagree with 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the D. of P. In order to clarify his position, he puts forward a number of propositions. The first

sentence of no. 20 reads: "A socialist party cannot aim at gaining control of the governmental machinery." This is in opposition to the sixth principle of the SPGB (dealt with above). A. Turner states (no. 12): "A socialist party is not a class or group party: it is not a capitalist class party, nor is it a working class party." Proposition no. 14 begins "A socialist party does not appeal to any class or group as such." Is this true?

The SPGB has a pamphlet entitled *Socialism*. To whom is it addressed? The first sentence in the pamphlet says: "These words are addressed to the members of the working class."

The election address of C. Groves in July 1945 began "Fellow Workers", and in November 1946 "Fellow working men and women". In February 1950 both addresses (H. Young, East Ham South and G. McClatchie, Paddington North) began "Fellow working men and women", and in November 1953 W. Waters' began "Fellow Workers".

The leaflet *Introducing the SPGB* states "The watchword of the SPGB is that the workers have a historic mission of shouldering

the responsibility of achieving Socialism and thus enabling the human race to make a further step forward in social progress". It should be absolutely clear that the SPGB *does* appeal to a particular class, namely the working class. But A. Turner states "A socialist party does not appeal to any class or group as such". Presumably, then, in his view the SPGB is not a Socialist Party.

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Now with regard to the Editorial Committee of FORUM, it states in the February issue "It must, with due regard to our fallibility, be said that nothing which has appeared so far could lead us to assert that within the Party there are those who hold opinions which are incompatible with membership of the Party". I have in this article given some facts for the Editorial Committee. I consider that I have proved my case and that these individuals stand condemned by their own articles.

Even if the Editorial Committee supports their views and believes the Party is wrong and that the D. of P. requires drastically amending, that doesn't alter the fact that they disagree with the Party's case and are attacking it from the inside. Opposition to

the Party's case should come from outside the Party.

The acceptance and understanding of the D. of P. leads us to our object. The opponents of the D. of P. put the cart before the horse. They take the object first, which to them is the ideal, and endeavour to build up to it. This is utopianism; G. Plechanoff sums them up admirably: "The Utopian is one who, starting from an abstract principle, seeks for a perfect social organisation."

The SPGB stresses in all its literature, except FORUM, the class character of the Party, and I call upon the members of the SPGB to strive to maintain it. We must do all we can to discourage those who do not understand the meaning of revolutionary politics from attaching themselves to the SPGB.

D. W. LOCK.

EDITORIAL NOTE

As Editorial Committee we do not, as has been suggested, take sides in FORUM controversies, nor did we in the editorial to which Lock refers. We consider that charges made against members should be substantiated. So far as the Editorial Committee of a controversial journal has any policy, we try to limit it to this function.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence and articles should be sent to FORUM, S.P.G.B., 52, Clapham High St., London, S.W. 4. Subscriptions 12 months, 7/6d, 6 months 3/9d. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to: E. Lake, S.P.G.B.

To the Editors

After reading Lock's article ("Revisionism and Renegades in the S.P.G.B.") I am inclined to agree that "there is a rotten spirit making itself felt in the Party today." I would, however, suggest that this rottenness of spirit is being introduced by one of the more orthodox members amongst us i.e. Lock.

It is nothing short of impudence on the part of any member to lay down rules and regulations regarding what shall be said in "Forum" or at the discussion forums. Neither of these media was intended as a way in which members could merely reaffirm the D. of P. It was largely because a need was expressed to discuss our D. of P. and basic attitudes that "Forum" came into existence.

We all as party members created this

Journal, but Lock now wants to remove from the Party those members who have utilised this machinery for the very purpose it was intended. Why? Presumably because they have reached conclusions that Lock finds unacceptable. It would have been better if Lock had used "Forum" as it was intended, and DISCUSSED the merits of the arguments and shown why he considers them unsound or non-socialist. This he makes no attempt whatever to do.

Lock says there are members in the Party who are opposed to the D. of P. This he considers undesirable because he holds the D. of P. as an essential guide to the achievement of Socialism, and draws the conclusion that because some members do not accept these principles in their entirety they therefore repudiate our aim—Socialism. This conclusion does not follow, and is not in fact the case. To the best of my knowledge, those comrades who do not wholly accept the D. of P. give as their principal reason that such acceptance is inconsistent with a clear understanding of our socialist aim.

So that the real position is as follows. On the one hand we have Lock and others who

maintain that an understanding and acceptance of the D. of P. is an essential condition for the achievement of our aim. On the other hand, there are those members who feel that a re-examination and modification of those principles is essential to a better understanding of our objective. In fact they claim, with much justification in my view, that it is their very loyalty to the socialist objective of the Party that has led them to a questioning of the D. of P. Far from being anti-socialist, if their claims are sound, they are adopting a more truly socialist attitude than Lock!

Now, how are we to judge the merits of these conflicting views unless we allow their full and free expression in the journal organised for this purpose? To this question Lock gives no answer. In fact, if we are to judge ability by performance then Lock's glaring inability to deal with the substance of the discussions to which he takes such violent emotional exception has served merely to discredit the ideas he would have us all accept. As this is not in the best interests of the Party I look forward to a more reasonable statement of Lock's views in a future issue of "Forum."

Joan Lestor.

Contributions for May should be sent in by April 13th.

A NEW SLOGAN FOR THE S.P.G.B.

"The Emancipation of Capitalist Class"

The most astonishing thing about A.A.N.'s article (2) on "Class Struggle and the S.P.G.B." is that he makes no attempt to refute indignantly what must surely be the most damning and humiliating thing that could be said to a socialist, namely, my original contention that the ideas expressed by him, ostensibly based on socialist knowledge and ideas, are in fact non- or anti-socialist.

A.A.N.'s expressed attitude to the class struggle, and his interpretation of it, are essentially anti-socialist. This is the criticism that A.A.N. and his supporters must deal with. Springing directly out of this expressed attitude, a fierce controversy has arisen among members over the rôle of the class struggle in the achievement of socialism. Witness, for instance, Comrade Turner's point 14 ("Forum" Feb.): "A Socialist Party does not appeal to any class or group as such."

It is no exaggeration to say that this viewpoint constitutes a sufficient departure from the viewpoint of other party members to refer to it as a split. In fact, if it is held, as I and (I believe) many others do, that this is an anti-socialist approach, then we can agree that the matter is sufficiently important to be thrashed out.

As I see it, the acid test of whether this point of view is in line with the aims and object of the S.P.G.B. is as follows. Would an applicant for membership be admitted if he were to disagree with the D. of P. and its implication that the *first and foremost* aim of the socialist revolution will be to strip the capitalist class of the source of its power, wealth and privilege, namely, of its ownership of the means of wealth production?

I think it would be easier, at the moment, for a camel to go through the eye of a small needle than for such an applicant to become a member. If, however, the stage is ever reached when such an attitude becomes permissible in the S.P.G.B. it would be time for me to make a move.

As it is, I think it is A.A.N. and those holding his viewpoint who should make the move out of the party. Probably I shall be pounced upon and told that this is *not* the point of view held and expressed by A.A.N. Let us see, then.

Quote (1) "What reasoning brings the S.P.G.B. to hate one class more than the

other when *neither class has socialism as its interest?*" (my italics).

Nos. 3, 4, 7 and, by clear implication, No. 5 of our D. of P. speak quite distinctly of "the emancipation of the working class." Is it, then, in the interests of the working class to be emancipated or is this just an empty, meaningless phrase, "signifying nothing"?

If the former be true then the working class *has* got socialism in its interest. On the other hand, if the latter is correct we may as well scrap the whole lot, for the whole of the D. of P. rests on the assumption—and, moreover, the powerful protagonist—of the socialist revolution effecting the emancipation of the working class.

It can, no doubt, be argued in return that No. 4 principle goes on to say that this will "involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex." Certainly this latter part is not free from ambiguity, but it does *not* go on to include "or class," which would suggest that the capitalist class, too, would be emancipated.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that socialism is in the interests of the working class, since it involves its emancipation from wage-slavery, and is against the interest of the capitalist class, since it involves an end to *its* power, privilege and dominancy.

STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

Quote (2) "The struggle between classes is NOT one for socialism."

Presumably the struggle he refers to is the one for higher wages, better conditions, etc. A little careful thought will show, however, that this is not a homogeneous, overall clear-cut struggle between the two classes, but is a continuous, shifting conflict between various differing sections of these classes.

In fact, sections of the capitalist group more than welcome a manifestation of struggle for higher wages where it suits their interests. For instance, the struggle of Japanese workers for higher wages is viewed with benevolent interest by certain sections of the British ruling clique, as witness the favourable comment in *The Times* editorial (12.2.54).

These instances could be shown to apply both to the ruling class and to the working class. As A.A.N. himself points out, "the working class is not a united body, but a

category of people with a wide diversity of economic interests. . . . Within the S.P.G.B. all such classifications vanish." *Precisely.* It is only in the struggle for socialism that the working class becomes united in its aims and objective.

The key word is *struggle*. The struggle "to expropriate the expropriators," to strip the capitalist class of its possession of the means of production, no matter what form this ownership takes in the future—this is the *primary* object of the socialist revolution.

In the struggle on the industrial field, the worker hopes to extract at best another 10/- or so per week from his capitalist's wealth. On the political field, we are demanding the *whole lot*. And yet A.A.N. has the impertinence to tell us there is no antagonism here, that there is no class struggle in the political pursuit of socialism! When we hold that the workers must bring about Socialism, we mean that this is the class struggle in all its historical essence. And, if it is not the capitalist class we are struggling against, who or what is it then?

The reply forthcoming will no doubt be: working-class ignorance and apathy. In fact, this can be the only alternative answer. But to pose working-class ignorance as an obstruction to socialism is only begging an historical question and has nothing to do with the principle of the class struggle as argued here.

And the reason, as I see it, which makes A.A.N.'s anti-class struggle viewpoint an anti-socialist one is that this must inevitably distract the socialist movement from its main objective and gather to it every conceivable sort of hotch-potch element, making an end eventually to our existence as a socialist party. If this is exaggerated, then the party has been putting forward exaggerated arguments now for 50 years against contaminating itself with non- or anti-socialist elements.

My further comments on A.A.N.'s article are intended to illustrate the validity of the above contention and to show how the anti-class struggle attitude inevitably leads to anti-working class ideas and anti-socialist results.

DIVERSITY OF INTERESTS

Would it not have been more to the point to have stressed "the wide diversity of economic interests" of the capitalist class, which run into hundreds of thousands of pounds, rather than that of the working class, which

vary in comparison from about £5 to £15 or £20?

But, whereas there is little or no unity of interests among the capitalists (dog eat dog; big fish swallows small fish, etc.) there is certainly one amongst the workers, albeit they are mostly unaware of it. The favourable influence on sections of workers agitating for pay increases when some other section forces a rise in pay is well-known and proved. Likewise, when some workers succeed in effecting an improvement in their working conditions the example is not lost on others, and so on. The whole struggle-ridden history of the working class tells of this unity of interests.

Could anything be more miserably anti-working class than A.A.N.'s remarks on this subject — "because predominantly both (capitalists and workers) have the same idea: self-interest and the seeking of power and privilege at the expense of other individuals and groups."

What gibberish nonsense is this! How it would warm the heart of the worst kind of middle-class philistine, and what a bitter blow to our constantly reiterated assertion that work (even under capitalism) is a fundamental social impulse. What an appalling ignorance A.A.N. displays of the bitter

history of working-class exploitation! If it were not so tragic that a supposed socialist accuses workers (its application to the capitalist class is, of course, perfectly appropriate) of spending their lives "seeking power and privilege," it would be laughable to the *n*th degree.

Again, on this question of who does the dirty work of apologising for capitalism—is it suggested that the vast mass of workers are concerned in it? Of course they are not. *They* are the recipients. Capitalists may not be the brains behind capitalist propaganda, but their interests are and it is their money which pays for the dirty work.

"All workers are assisting their masters to live in luxury or relative ease." Yes, by heavens, but what do they get for it! A.A.N. speaks of the "atrocities that workers perpetrate against each other." Again, is this true of the vast majority of working people? Or is it manifested only by a few, and then only under the terrible pressure of battle conditions, performed in the interests of capitalist profit?

To prove his points A.A.N. resorts to twisting the facts, as witness: "Capitalism is not the property of the capitalist class—it is the sum total of the activities of the whole of society."

It would be interesting to know how an abstraction can be classified as property. The sum total of the activities of the whole of society goes to create quite a bit of capitalist wealth. In fact, would it be an exaggeration to say that practically all the industrial, commercial and financial activities are directed to the realisation and protection of rent, interest and profit? And is it not an essential part of our propaganda to reveal to workers that this is what they spend the major part of their lives doing?

Also difficult to comprehend, coming from a member of the party, are the contemptuous references to "the party's case." Does he really know what that case is? And if he does profess to know it and disagrees with it, then his place is outside not inside our organisation.

The achievement of socialism means quite clearly the dispossession of the capitalist class of its ownership of the means of production by the working class. This is what we mean by the socialist revolution. *One* class overthrowing the dominancy of *another*. If this is not the essence and meaning of the class struggle, then I await to hear how socialism is going to be achieved without the overthrow of the capitalist class.

Judd (Lewisham)

ON WORKERS AND CAPITALISTS

As a Socialist I do not hate the capitalist class or individual capitalists. To my mind such an approach would be an unscientific one.

As I am a worker I am opposed to the interests of the capitalist class. This carries with it no moral judgments on individuals—only on the system.

I am a worker and because of that I am a Socialist for, as I see it, the only solution to working-class problems is to abolish capitalism. By that I mean to establish socialism. I should have thought the last statement was unnecessary but Comrade Turner apparently thinks there is some difference between abolishing capitalism and establishing socialism. I don't know what Comrade Turner thinks could be established, other than socialism, when capitalism is abolished.

We as a Party have analysed working-class problems at great length and in great detail and we have come to the conclusion that they *cannot* be solved within capitalism. It is therefore in the interests of the working class to establish socialism.

The Party has never analysed the problems of the capitalist class very thoroughly. The capitalist has problems—yes, but is their *only* solution socialism? I think not. Most of his problems can be solved within capitalism with a little ingenuity on his part.

The question itself of whether the capitalist can or will understand and want socialism I consider rather irrelevant as we can get the majority to establish socialism with or without them.

What interests me is the *method* used by Comrade Turner in arriving at his conclusions. I base my views and my arguments on the M.C.H. Does Comrade Turner? I have heard these "brotherly love and charity" arguments before. The Catholics, who say they are opposed to capitalism, suggest that if capitalists gave workers a little more and workers were then satisfied with what they got then everyone would live happily ever afterwards. This is the sort of argument I have heard and rejected before. The fact that now it is used to champion something that I want (socialism) does not interest me. No doubt for the same reason

that I agreed with the E.C. when they didn't let the Christian Scientist into the Party.

The worker who is not interested in the class struggle is usually the religious one, the one who thinks that his boss does him a favour to give him a job, the one who is not interested in national or world events at all. As one becomes a Socialist one becomes more indifferent to the pleas of the boss about his profits and to the entreaties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer about our "dollar reserves" and "overseas investments." One becomes more militant in demanding higher real wages for oneself and for other workers and at the same time avoids anti-working-class action (such as opposition to coloured or foreign workers). If this happens to the Socialist on a personal level why deny this attitude when we band together as a Party of Socialists?

The Party, quite rightly, has never "taken part" in industrial action in the usual way. Reason? We've got something better to do—working for socialism. But why go to the other extreme and pretend no interest at all in the class struggle?

L. Bryan.

CASTRATED SOCIALISM

Reply to Turner

Turner, in his 25 principles, does not argue a positive case but expects us to argue a negative position. He mentions in his opening paragraph that he wishes to avoid using language which might obscure the arguments. As there are no arguments, but merely a series of numbered sentences, I assume that their profundity might not survive the author's attempts to explain them. Purely as a point of interest, who are these members who believe that "power and privilege" will exist under socialism? This phrase occurs no less than seven times.

Principle 1 states: "Socialism is in the interests of every human being throughout the entire world." This is a philosophical abstract truth, as socialism is undoubtedly a superior form of social organisation which will operate in the interests of all human beings and not just in the interest of a tiny group of human beings as is the case with capitalism. From a practical point of view the slogan is worse than useless, as we shoulder the responsibility for showing that capitalism does not run in the interests of the capitalists—a very debatable proposition.

To deal with the problems of the capitalist makes a mockery of the class struggle and reduces our case to caricature. The French Revolution was in the interests of the whole of humanity—a historical abstract truth. The function of a Socialist Party is to prove that socialism (common ownership) is in the interests of a majority, a statement which is valid and can be argued from any angle. The other position is absolutist and dangerous, as it encourages workers to sink their class differences. The first manifestation of this humanity argument is reflected in the attitude of Turner S.R.P., A.A.N., to trade unions. The logic of the position they have taken up leads them to oppose trade unions and the struggle for higher wages which they must condemn as being anti-social.

2. "Socialism means the social equality of humanity. . . ." What is social equality outside of common ownership and democratic control, etc.? Power and privilege cannot exist where these two factors prevail.

3, 4 and 5 inform us that there is a class struggle. 6 tells us that capitalist class interests are capitalist class interests and that working class interests are working class

interests. We are never told what these interests really are. Turner must not take it for granted that we know already, in view of the surprising allegations contained in his thesis.

7 brings in an economic bastard under the heading "Group interests." Has Turner considered the possibility of people belonging to several social groups at the same time, i.e., Roman Catholic workers, Roman Catholic employers, competing Jewish capitalists, international capitalists, black capitalists, black workers. According to Turner's own statement all these groups are mutually antagonistic to each other, but on the other hand do not religious groups of all kinds have something in common with each other and the capitalists, and have a common interest in opposing socialism and supporting power and privilege? Does Turner think he has exhausted the whole field of social groups by mentioning four? How about Freemasons, Trade Unionists, Boy Scouts, the British Legion, not forgetting the Group who lay the wreath on Charles I's statue every year on his anniversary. These are organised social groups who are not antagonistic to each other.

8 and 9 are meaningless unless we are told what social interests are. Working-class interests are human interests and the interest of the working class is socialism. The mutual antagonism referred to by Turner is from our point of view on the issue of socialism in the final analysis, i.e., the class struggle.

No. 11 is meaningless. No. 12 tells us that a Socialist Party is a Socialist Party. 13. is incorrect. It is not the existence of property which gives rise to class struggles—it is the division of that property. Common property will exist in socialist society where there will be no antagonisms. 14 and 15 are variations of 1 dealt with above.

16 reaffirms the first part of 1 and the latter phrase ". . . can only be established by methods which are in harmony with human interests" would appear sheer mysticism were it not for 17, which brings in our old friend violence and the time-worn speculation on its use or non-use. This is a largely academic question and does not really relate to socialism at all (if you examine it) but to some spiritual and moral quality endowed by Turner on that super-

natural being the ideal social man.

* * *

Dealing with the question "does socialism depend on working class understanding?" the answer is obviously yes. Put a further question: "will violence be instrumental in the establishment of socialism?" The answer is no. Put a final question: "will violence prevent the establishment of socialism?" The answer is again no. Whether violence will be used during the establishment of socialism by a disgruntled minority cannot in any way affect the main issue, which is working-class understanding.

18 claims that all people must understand socialism prior to its establishment. I hope I am not being unfair to Turner, but the terms of the proposition are so vague that this is all I am able to deduce from it. It means nothing otherwise. If my deduction is correct it would mean that so long as a tiny group of capitalists, religious fanatics, and hitherto undiscovered tribes in Africa or elsewhere do not understand socialism we cannot have it. Turner must argue a case here and not maintain a negative position.

Socialism can be established by a majority of the working class within the relationship of labour and capital, the dominant forces in society. Society today is capitalism and vice versa. Society constitutes those working within a given economic framework with distinct social relations over the social means of production. Socialism is not the counting of heads in the world, it does not depend on quantity but on quality. Quality representing the socialist ideas of the working class who alone have social responsibility in production. Society is an organisation for production and nothing else. I am not interested in whether the Dalai Llama or the Pope can understand socialism. Backward people will see the physical benefits of socialism after its establishment.

In 19, Turner has balanced his statement so delicately that it is difficult to discover which side of the fence he is on. Assuming that he agrees with the D. of P. on the question of Parliament, is he seriously suggesting that members of the S.P.G.B. hold the view that the state will exist under socialism? Is this one of the differences Turner has with members, or is it fictional?

On the other hand, assuming that he disagrees with the D. of P., is he suggesting that socialism can be established without getting control of the machinery of government? Until he is more specific there is little point in pursuing this at this stage.

21, 22, 23 and 24 appear to have been thrown in for good measure. At best they are a bundle of philosophical pious platitudes. 25 means that Socialists should advocate socialism not capitalism. Is Turner hinting in his use of the phrase "... or the conditions they may live under," that socialism was possible 500 or more years ago, or is he referring to the action Socialists should adopt in places like Russia, China or India, etc?

It seems to me that Turner will have to argue his case, not merely make statements in numerical order and then seize on the opposition. The views themselves are the product of 18 months heated and largely inconclusive discussion. The average members might well wonder what all the fuss is about before re-reading the Declaration of Principles or something else that matters.

J. D'Arcy.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors.

Over the past few years I have been developing my ideas about Socialism. I decided to put my views in writing, and they were published in the February "Forum."

As I stated in the introduction, I had chosen to present my views in the form of a series of propositions for two reasons (1) For the greater convenience of the readers who may wish to criticise them, and (2) To prevent my using language which might obscure the ideas I was trying to put over.

My sole purpose in writing is to present my ideas to others on the points of disagreement I have with some members of the Party. I have no desire to ridicule the views of those with whom I have disagreement, nor do I wish to score points.

In the March issue Coster writes an article under the title "The Sentimental Anarchists." It purports to deal with the views I set out in my article referred to above. I have searched Coster's article to find out where my ideas are shown to be incorrect. All I could discover was exaggerated flippancy and a laboured effort to score points. I am not prepared to enter into this kind of vulgar word-spinning. I am submitting another article next month further developing my case.

Turner.

THE NATURE OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

6. The Ideological Reflection

(continued)

There is a spectre haunting the Socialist movement—the spectre of Communism.

The Socialist, more consciously than any, sees political and ideological forms as expressing material interests, sees the differences between social systems as facets of their respective modes of production—materialism. The socialist, more consciously than any, is aware of change and development, has turned his eyes upon the whole sweep of history and distilled a general concept of social evolution—historical materialism. Yet, historical-evolutionist though he is, he cannot accept that Capitalism evolves (that is, that Socialism evolves), and materialist though he is, he cannot accept capital as the dynamic of his own society.

Large ideas (gravitation, materialism, socialism—things like that), grow slowly, like coral reefs, the precipitate of countless human acts and artifacts, and because today is always the summit of the pile it seems always that there is nothing more to add. The origin of the Party is an example of the tiny stages by which the new grows from the old. The features which distinguished us in 1904 from our immediate forbears were the need for a completely independent working class party, with a completely democratic organisation, and the insistence that our sole aim and the whole concern of our propaganda should be the establishment of a new society. But these elements of the revolutionary idea were not new: what was new was the integration of them. And they were brought to a focus, not as an exercise in logic, but as part of the social integrations implicit in the first Industrial Revolution which began with Marx and ended with the Party.

PRE-HISTORY OF THE PARTY

Until he was twelve, Will Evans had to learn reading and writing, and his college education was continued in the Socialist Sunday Schools, the Cinderella Clubs, the N.U.C., and the Labour Chapel run by the Rev. John Trevor in Rusholme, or in the derelict "Casino" music hall, where meetings were addressed by Bruce Glasier, Tom Mann, G. B. Shaw, Leonard Hall, John Burns. Sometimes, bowler-hatted and Sun-

day-bested, he walked into Salford, to the S.D.F. meetings of Quelch and Hyndman. He went to work with an older man who was an Anarchist and debunked God. He read the "Clarion," weekly, one penny, started by Robert ("delegates, not leaders") Blatchford with brother Monty and Thompson and Fay, and who founded the first independent national labour party, the I.L.P., of which William Evans (then a man of 19) joined the Manchester local in 1893.

In 1904 he resigned, because Keir Hardie had forced the abrogation of the "fourth clause" (the independence clause). In 1905 he came to London and found the Party he "had been looking for all these years." His form "A" was accepted with the joyful wariness of the elect, and the friendly warning to listen and learn. But it was only the words he had to learn, for his history was the pre-history of the Party. His pan, framed and yellow, adorns H.O. along with a hundred hardly distinguishable others, alike as peas, for they were nurtured in the same social pod.

The Party's fibre roots embrace this topsoil of the nineteenth century, but it is taprooted in the tenth. We descend from the Anglo-Saxon village moot which raised two fingers, *ouverts*, in the face of Norman fief, setting the pattern of salute for Protestant and Non-conformist and Society of Friends, the pattern of conscience for Winstanley and Wilkes, the patterns of trial by jury, presumption of innocence, right of appeal, rule of law, permissive legislation, local government, voluntary enlistment, free association, Habeas Corpus and Hyde Park—the peculiarly individualistic democracy elsewhere known only where it was exported in the Mayflower or deported from Dorset to Botany Bay.

Party democracy is the summit of a thousands years of freedom from conquest within safe ramparts of water. It is the adjective "G.B." The distinctly revolutionary substance of the S.P. is the vision of an integrated society, which is the integration, the sharpened focus, of the unsteady lights of nineteenth-century working-class revolt, whose partial articulations we know as Labourism, Anarchism, Communism.

But the integration is not complete. The part articulations overlap, but have not been lost in a single focus. Cast your mind, comrade, over *other* members of the Party. Can you not distinguish those who are more Anarchist from those who are more Communist, or one on this issue and the other on that? Have we not read in *Freedom* things "good enough for the *Standard*?" Haven't we often said that "all that's wrong with the Anarchist is his anarchism"? Isn't the Communist (as a bloke) someone akin, with whom militance and Marxism and revolution and class struggle are at least *good* words? Do we not expect to recruit from the Left Wing (and indeed do we not recruit for it!)?

The Party is still a mixture of these distinguishable components, and not yet a synthesis qualitatively different from them, as water is neither oxygen nor hydrogen. With the "social administration of things" we have purged Anarchism of its anarchy—but still regard the Socialist Idea as sovereign (the dynamic), which is therefore the sovereignty of *my* idea, *my* conscience, *my* ego. With the "social administration of things" we have purged Communism of dictatorship—but reserve the right to shoot. We oppose our own components when we meet them separately outside our own corpus. We go gunning Anarchists with communist law and order, and cosh Communists with the classless freedom in which there is no law, no compulsion, no constraint, no authority, no morals. We oppose these things with these things because the Socialist movement combines but does not yet transcend them.

INHERITED DICHOTOMY

In his own time, and on his own doorstep, Marx had seen the fall of Feudalism and the rise of Capitalism. He lived struggle and revolt, and trampled out the vineyard where the grapes of wrath are stored. The air he breathed was still charged with the volcanic dust of the French Revolution, and industrial revolutionary termors still rocked the earth under him. Thus, in the Manifesto which he presented to the International, the Socialist theory of history which announces the imminence of civilisation plays down to the Communist political strategy which is the pattern of the bourgeois revolutions. The genius of Marx gave us an integrated theory—social evolution (M.C.H.)—but the quality of his time saddled it also with a theory of class struggle and of political revolution which applies to the transference of

production property between classes, within class society, but not to the abrogation of production property for a classless society.

We inherit this dichotomy. Thus we oppose the Communists, as being reformists, but accept their premises of political revolution, and the *motifs* of power and politics which underwrite it. We oppose power and politics, yet set up shop in competition (which, in the event, brings us to the verge of political window dressing). We oppose the Labour Party as being reformists, yet our propaganda turns upon poverty and insecurity, on which the reformist can out-bid us every time and all the time. Our aim is Socialism, but the core of our message is the hellfire of increasing misery and degradation which is the theme, precisely, of the labour-communist revolt against absolute surplus value.

We claim Socialist theory as a science, but our own historical-materialism is only idealism wrapped up in bread and butter. We aim to inaugurate civilisation, yet our concept of human needs is the barbaric notion of food, clothing and shelter. Congruent atom of a society which has polarised use and value, we polarise revolutionary Communism and anarchist Idealism. Congruent atom of a society in which everything is two-faced and contradictory, we acknowledge the materialist unity of social forms and continuity of historical change (acknowledge, that is, the organic character of society), yet insist on the establishment of civilisation by a surgical operation, in a theatre picketted with guns—the inorganic, unsocial, unhistorical concept of demolishing society and rebuilding on a cleared site.

F. Evans.

(to be continued)

SOCIALISTS AND THE CAPITALIST CLASS

In order to clarify his position on the issue "A Working Class Party or a Party Working For Socialism?" (there are some who do not see any issue at all in that title), Turner presents his views in no less than 25 propositions. Seventeen of these are merely platitudes derived from the D. of P., and with these platitudes no socialist who understands and agrees with the Declaration would disagree. The remaining eight propositions, sprinkled indiscriminately among the seventeen, can be reduced to two straightforward statements:—

1. A Socialist Party is not a class party, as it does not appeal to any particular class. It appeals to all mankind as humans because Socialism is in the interests of every human being.
2. A Socialist Party cannot aim at getting control of governmental machinery, because it relies upon the socialist understanding of the mass of people, and it cannot rely upon law and armed force for the introduction of Socialism.

The answer to the first statement is this: no one knows what socialism will be like and, therefore, no one can know its merits and demerits for present-day capitalists. We only know that socialism is an immediate solution to the working-class poverty problem, and this solution will necessarily dislodge the

capitalist class from its present privileged position.

Turner evidently believes that wealthy capitalists will willingly get off our backs and stand upon their own feet in return for the promise of some hypothetical future benefits which he is not able to describe. There is no foundation for this belief, exceptional cases like Engels notwithstanding. There is ample evidence that workers can understand the case for socialism just as easily as capitalists. As the workers are in the vast majority, the conversion of capitalists to socialism, even if possible, is superfluous.

The answer to the second statement is this: the capitalist class also relies upon the support of the mass of people. Are we not treated to a General Election every five years, and sometimes sooner? Yet, in spite of relying upon the support of the mass, the capitalist class, not so naïve as to think that it can convert all mankind, keeps a tight control on all governmental machinery and the armed force connected therewith—presumably for the unreliable minority.

E. Carnell.

We regret that the third line of type was omitted from col. 1 of page 21 in the March issue. It should have read: "Workers who are artists function primarily as workers. Capitalists who are artists function primarily as capitalists."